

Nick Crook (2-21-12)

This is another presentation in the Nice Neighbor program, which honors homeowners, residents, and businesses that improve the quality of life for their neighbors. The Community Relations Department is proud to present sixteen year-old award winner, Nick Crook. Nick was nominated by the Sterling Heights Parks & Recreation Department, a recent beneficiary of Nick's Eagle Scout Project.

During the winter of 2011, Nick approached the Parks & Recreation Department with an idea for his Eagle Scout project. Nick has cerebral palsy and is a wheel chair user. It had been Nick's experience that trying to use a normal picnic table was a daunting if not impossible task. Nick's idea for his project was to convert six regular picnic tables that are used in the parks throughout the city into tables that would be easily accessible to anyone using a wheelchair. When Nick's written proposal was approved by both the Parks & Recreation Department and the Boy Scouts, he set upon the task of finalizing the work schedule, recruiting volunteer labor, and raising funds to buy the needed equipment.

With help from the DPW, Nick finalized his work plan. Friends and family members supplied the labor and Nick held a bottle deposit return campaign to raise the \$600 needed to buy equipment. On a very hot Saturday in June, 2011, Nick assembled his crew and went about the task of taking the six old tables and converting them to new, wheel chair-accessible picnic tables. When completed, the tables were painted by the DPW and used for Sterlingfest. They were then put into position at the picnic shelters in Dodge, Nelson and Farmstead Parks. As a finishing touch, Nick painted the wheel chair emblem on all the tables.

Nick's project added a new amenity to Sterling Heights park system by identifying a problem often overlooked by others and then solving the problem faced by many wheelchair users. On Saturday, January 21, 2012, Nick was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout.

Nick actually raised more money than needed for his project. He decided to make a generous donation to the city's Special Recreation Summer Playground program where many of his friends take part.

Recreation Supervisor Joel Casey will also be in attendance at tonight's meeting to assist in the Nice Neighbor presentation to Nick Crook.